

A D D R E S S

DELIVERED BEFORE

NAVAL LODGE No. 100,

PORPSMOUTH, VIRGINIA,

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

Public Installation of Officers,

ON THE

ANNIVERSARY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST,

JUNE 24th, A. D. 1857; A. L., 5857.

—o—

BY REV. I. RANDOLPH FINLEY, D. D.,

PASTOR OF DINWIDDIE STREET METHODIST CHURCH,

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PORPSMOUTH, VA.

DAILY TRANSCRIPT STEAM BOOK AND JOB PRINTING OFFICE.

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A D D R E S S .

My BROTHERS—LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

The occurrence of a Public Installation of Officers elect of Naval Lodge, No. 100 ; Free and Accepted Ancient York Masons, of Portsmouth ; affords a suitable occasion on which to place before this large and intelligent audience an exposition of the principles and purposes of the Order ; and, although these may be familiar to most of you, yet their reiteration will not, we presume, be unacceptable even to those who are best acquainted with them ; while it may serve to correct erroneous impressions, in the minds of others, and to induce a better appreciation of the excellencies of this organization.

What, then, is Free Masonry? I reply :—Free Masonry is a moral Institution, deriving its ethics from the Scriptures of Divine inspiration : and the object of which is to inculcate great moral principles ; foster the liberal arts and sciences ; and fraternize the human family in one great brotherhood.

To have *faith* and *hope* in God, the Supreme Architect, and *charity* towards man, the master workmanship of his hands ; is among the very first lessons taught to her Sons by Free Masonry. This is the keystone of the arch, on which every other bears ; uniting all to itself, and binding the several parts together in one solid, permanent, and symmetrical whole. Yet she does not assume to prescribe *a mode* of faith, in which all shall agree ; but regarding each as responsible alone to Deity for his religious tenets ; she insists only on those fundamental points in which all *may* agree, and without which man is unworthy of the esteem and confidence of his fellows ; carefully excluding from her places of convection all sectarian creeds, all theological discussions.

Upon their first entrance into her halls, Free Masonry seeks to impress upon the minds of the initiates, by means of imposing ceremonies, expressive symbols, and admirable lectures, the moral excellence of the cardinal virtues—*Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence, and Justice*. Temperance, or that due restraint upon the affections and appetites which

renders the body submissive to the nobler emotions of the soul, and frees the soul itself from the allurements of vice; while health, peace and happiness attend as the results:—Fortitude, a virtue equally remote from rashness and cowardice; and which assured of right, and sustained by conscious integrity of purpose, enables us to encounter pain, peril, or danger when prudentially deemed expedient:—Prudence,

—————By which
We do consult of all that's good or evil
Conducing to felicity.

and Justice, which withholds from none his right, but gives to each his due; a virtue which is not only consistent with divine and human law, but without which civil society would cease to exist.

Free Masonry also inculcates *Brotherly-love*, *Relief*, and *Truth*. She teaches her sons that all men are brethren; members of one great family, having mutual claims on each other's sympathy and kind offices. She invites to her Lodges the peaceful and the virtuous, that she may connect them by vows of amity in a most sacred, intimate, and endeared alliance; and concentrate their best efforts for their mutual advantage. Uniting their resources in one common fund, and forming a community of interests, she makes the prosperity of one the object of the whole, and the prosperity of the whole, the object of each individual. Hence the Fraternity, though dispersed all over the globe, seems to be one body actuated by one soul. Hundreds of thousands have one heart and one hand; the heart of benevolence, the hand of charity.

Here is the distinguishing characteristic of the Order; the *Jachin* and *Boaz* of our Masonic edifice. *Charity*, which

Droppeth as the gentle rain from Heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blessed:
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown.

Not *that* charity which is the mere offspring of the purse, and with which the heart, too frequently, has nothing in unison—not that selfish, ostentatious charity, which is prompted by a weak desire for human applause—not that charity which gives with the hope that the world will in some way return ten-fold; but that charity whose acts result from virtuous motives, assimilating man to the image of his Maker, inspiring in the soul a feeling of world-wide benevolence, and prompting us to preserve, by our conduct and influence, the union and harmony of the moral universe. This is *Masonic Charity*—co-extensive with the dwelling places of the human family. It is

—A sympathy with sighs and tears,
And groans: a great, a god-like wish to heal
All misery, all fortune's wounds, and make
The soul of every living thing rejoice.

It has bread for the hungry, a cup of wine to cheer the sorrowful, raiment for the naked, a shelter for the stranger. It protects the widow and the fatherless, educates the orphan, and pours the healing oil of consolation into the wounds which sickness has made in the bodies, or affliction in the hearts of men. Nor is this all. Masonic charity teaches, that a Mason should not only cultivate feelings of general benevolence towards all of his race, but that he should especially minister to the wants, moral as well as physical, of a brother. He is to assist him with his best council and advice, gently remind him of his failings, aid in his reformation from vice and restoration to virtue; vindicate his character when wrongfully traduced, and even when his conduct is justly reprehended, suggest such palliating circumstances as the nature of the case will admit. He is particularly to banish from his heart all personal resentments, all angry feelings against a brother; to forgive him if he has offended, and to extend to him the hand of fellowship and love.—Should he still offend—should he accumulate wrong upon wrong, and add injustice to injustice, still he is to be considered as *a brother*. He must be again and again forgiven, and kind persuasion and affectionate remonstrance are to be employed to satisfy him of his errors. Should all prove uavailing—should proffered pardon and forgiveness, love and friendship be rejected—should kind persuasion and affectionate remonstrance be continued, and he still persist in the indulgence of his unholy passions, yet he is still to be considered as *a brother*; and when prayer is made, night and morning, to the Great Author of Light, the erring brother is to be remembered at the Mercy-seat, and this petition added—"Father forgive him; he knows not what he does." Such is Masonic Charity.

Not soon provoked, she easily forgives;
And much she suffers, as she much believes.
Soft peace she brings wherever she arrives;
She builds our quiet as she forms our lives;
Lays the rough paths of peevish nature even,
And opens in each heart a little heaven.

Here we might appropriately allude to the practical effects of this fundamental principle of our Order; but her benevolent deeds, like her centuries—embracing history, have not been inscribed on tablets of brass, or monuments of marble. She has chosen to enshrine them in

the myriad hearts of those towards whom her charities have been exercised. Her "left hand knoweth not what her right hand doeth." Her charities are bestowed in secret, and the Grand Master of the Universe, "which seeth in secret, himself shall reward her openly," in that great day when the Book, in which the Recording Angel hath written her deeds, shall be opened to the inspection of all. Then, "the gazing multitude, who now so curiously inquire our *secret*, shall be astonished to learn that *the greatest deep of Masonic Secrecy was the unpublished act of doing good!*"

Truth is another of the great principles in which Free Masonry instructs her children :

Truth—the startling monitor within us—
Nought is without it it comes from the stars,
The golden sun, and every breeze that blows—
Truth is God ! and God is everywhere!

The great duty of being truthful is illustratrated in our halls by appropriate symbols, and enforced by most touching and eloquent ceremonies. Hence the members of the Fraternity are wont to repose implicit confidence in the integrity and truthfulness of each other, and to enjoy the pleasing assurance that the language of a brother's lips speaks the true sentiments of his heart :—how necessary this to our comfort and peace of mind, surrounded as we are by so much that is specious, yet false ; shewy, yet deceitful ; and by so little that is true and sincere !

But, we have said that Free Masonry fosters the liberal arts and sciences. In all ages she has been their constant friend, their enthusiastic admirer, their munificent patroness. In the remote ages of antiquity she first introduceed them to the notice of those about her, and employed them in the building and embellishment of towns and cities. By their aid, at a later period, she erected that first Temple, dedicated to the worship of the true and living God, on Mt. Moriah, to which the tribes of Israel were wont to repair annually, as to a central point from which their united praises should ascend, their prayers be made, and their sacrifices be offered to the Great Architect of the Universe, who "formed the earth by his power, established the world by his wisdom, and stretched out the heavens at his discretion." Still later we find her rearing upon the ruins of the former, by the same means, a second temple, for the same laudable purpose, less magnificent, it is true, than the first, yet affording ample proof of her skill and piety.

To the cultivation of the Arts and Sciences by Free Masons, ancient Greece and Rome were indebted for those splendid edifices which once

(Extract from page 9 - See before.)

(See following pamphlet
insert at page 8.)

stood so proudly upon their classic sites, exhibiting the various graces and beauties of the Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, Tuscan, and Composite orders of architecture; and the ruins of which still furnish such rich and inexhaustible themes to the poet, the painter, and the sculptor. When the savage nations of the North poured upon the sunny plains of the South, their barbaric hordes, like an Alpine avalanche, sweeping from the earth almost every vestige of civilization, and banishing the Arts and Sciences to gloomy cells and caves; Free Masonry was still their Guardian Angel. And when the storm had passed by, she again brought them forth to the light, employing them in the erection and adornment of halls, temples, and palaces, where they might once more become the study of the wise and the good.

She has been their constant companion and friend ever since; and although Free Masons are now speculative rather than operative, while we are proud to say some are both; yet are they still the admirers and patrons of science, literature, and the useful and ornamental arts; and there is, perhaps, no association of men where is to be found a greater taste for such pursuits, or equal liberality manifested for their encouragement.

Such are the principles, objects, and pursuits of our Order. What fault do any here find with them? What stone from the foundation to the Cape-stone, in our Masonic edifice, mars the general keeping; is a blemish on her beautiful proportions? Which would ye have removed "Walk about her, go round about her; tell her towers, mark well her bulwarks, and consider her palaces. Look out upon the face of human society. See the proud contemning the humble; the powerful oppressing the weak; the stranger, sick in a distant land, and penniless; the widow, thrown upon the world's cold charities; the orphan, bereft of kindred and friends; the myriad phazes of human suffering:—then look upon Free Masonry and mark its adaptation to just such a condition of things:—an Institution which fraternizes the dwellers on all the earth, and binds mankind together in the bonds of a noble brotherhood, regardless and in spite of variant creeds and crafts; which unites the elevated and the obscure, the rich and the poor, the learned and the illiterate, acknowledging no distinction of classes, grades, or castes, save those which are based on virtue. An Institution, founded in wisdom, sustained by strength, and manifested in beauty, extending from the Orient to the Occident, from the icy barriers of the North to the utmost verge of human habitation in the South; and upon whose walls are inscribed, in

characters of living light, *Faith, Hope, Charity; Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth*; lustrous as so many gems of purest ray serene, mingling their rich hues and resplendent beams in one blaze of glorious effulgence, lighting up the temple where presides the genius of Free Masonry, and from which she dispenses, with impartial hand, blessings to the entire human family. What fault find any with her? Do I hear the response coming up from this large auditory, "We find no fault in her?" It is what might be expected as the verdict of an intelligent and impartial jury. And yet there are objections elsewhere, if not here, and it may be well to notice some of these for a moment.

Some object to our *secrecy*, and sneeringly inquire, how we can reconcile it with our avowed principles and professions, to withhold from the world at large that which we declare to be so worthy of all acceptance? Our reply is simply this. We withhold the peculiar benefits and privileges of our Order from none who are qualified to enjoy them; but we claim the right to judge for ourselves, who are and who are not so qualified. This right, we think, cannot with propriety be denied to us. We are ever ready to bestow them upon the wise and the virtuous; but to share them with the world promiscuously, would be to defeat the very purpose of our organization, without benefitting the masses. Besides, what trade, what association of men, for purposes, civil, political, or religious; what family; what individual has not his secrets which are carefully concealed from the world at large, and confided alone to the true and trustworthy? Shall it alone be objectionable in us, if not criminal, to have secrets? We declare most frankly, that so far from desiring to exclude any from the rights and benefits of Free Masonry, we heartily wish that all were qualified to be partakers with us; and that the doors, the hands, and the hearts of all true Masons are ever open for the reception of those who may be so qualified. What more could be reasonably demanded?

Others object that our pretensions to universal benevolence are mere rhetorical flourishes, since we are wont to exercise the largest measure of our charity towards those who are of our own brotherhood. Who, I ask, have stronger claims upon us than our own brethren? Our benevolence cannot possibly reach to the infinite number who need aid and consolation. A discrimination must be made; and why not in favor of those who are allied to us by the strongest bonds of fraternal affection? Nevertheless, we are not exclusive; but, as far as our ability extends,

we are always ready to relieve any and every worthy applicant, whether of our Order or not.

A far more serious objection than any we have noticed is urged against Free Masonry, on the ground of the immoral conduct, and unmasonic behavior of members of the society. Would to Heaven that there were no foundation for this reproach! Would that the lives of Masons everywhere exemplified the virtues, and adorned the principles by which they profess to be governed! Would there were always the moral nerve to exclude from their midst every unworthy son of the Order! Yet, I ask, is the fact that there are and have been Masons, from whose persons the insignia of the Craft should be torn away, as dishonored by the contact: is this a fair test of the Institution itself? Will you apply it to the Government under whieh you live, and of whose excellency you have daily evidence, and argue that its laws are corrupt, its institutions hurtful and dangerous, because thieves, murderers and other disturbers of the public peace, and domestic quietude go at large unpunished? Surely not. Again, because there have been and are hypocrites—men

Who steal the livery of the court of Heaven,
To serve the devil in; in virtue's guise,
Devour the widow's house, and orphan's bread:
In holy places transact villanies,
That common sinners dare not meddle with,

will you therefore say that christianity is a fable, a deception—a vile and dangerous thing? Surely you cannot; surely your sober reason revolts against the application of such a test to the religion of the Bible, while you see thousands of its professors around you who are devout, sincere, consistent,—epistles read and known of all men proving the doctrines they profess to be indeed all divine.

Free Masonry, too, has *her* epistles. It is a fact that should be written in letters of gold, that every general officer in the Revolutionary Army was a Mason, *except Benedict Arnold, the traitor!* George Washington was a Mason, for more than forty years, spent in the camp, in the cabinet, and in domestic retirement. Initiated into the mysteries of Free and Accepted Ancient York Masonry in 1752; passed to the more honorable degree of Fellow Craft on the 3d of March 1753; and raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason on the 4th of August following; this right minded and true hearted man, whom patriots delight to style the Father of his Country, continued in constant affiliation with the Order until his death, when he was buried with the honors of the Craft. His appreciation of Free Masonry may be gathered from the fact, that

during the entire Revolutionary struggle, he had constantly with him in his camp a traveling Lodge, of which he was the presiding officer. And when in 1790 he received, amid the peaceful shades of Mount Vernon, a congratulatory letter from King David's Lodge of Newport, R. I.; we find him using such language as this in his reply :—“ Being persuaded that a just application of the principles on which the Masonic Fraternity is founded, must be promotive of private virtue, and public prosperity, I shall always be happy to advance the interests of the Society, and to be considered by them as a deserving Brother.” In 1792, in response to a similar communication from the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, he says :—“ Flattering as it may be to the human mind, and truly honorable as it is, to receive from our fellow citizens, testimonials of approbation for exertions to promote the public welfare, it is not the less pleasing to know, that the milder virtues of the heart are highly respected by a Society whose liberal principles are founded in the immutable laws of Truth and Justice. To enlarge the sphere of social happiness is the benevolent design of the Masonic Institution, and it is most fervently to be wished that the conduct of every member of the Fraternity, as well as those publications that discover the principles which actuate them, may tend to convince Mankind that the great object of masonry is to promote the happiness of the human race.”

And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of the distinguished men of other days and of our own age, whose illustrious lives have gathered no small proportion of their beauty and symmetry from Masonic instruction and influence; and have, in their turn, nobly illustrated the excellence of the Order. Suffice it to point you to these witnesses, and to allude to the significant fact that throughout the length and breadth of our own land, if not throughout Christendom, there is scarcely a single branch of the great Protestant family, the ministry of which is not largely and most respectably represented in the Society of Free Masons, by actual affiliation and active co-operation. Now are these numerous witnesses, from the various departments of social position, competent to certify the principles, the purposes, the tendencies of this association or are they not? Are they worthy of your acceptation or are they not? Do they know whereof they affirm? Who know better than they? Are they likely to be influenced by unworthy motives? Is not their character above suspicion? Is their attestation uncertain, or is it clear and direct? Does not their intelligent, unbiased, conse-

tient, persistent, testimony most fully vindicate the Masonic Fraternity from the objection which is now under consideration?

The last objection we shall notice on this occasion, comes from a source which is entitled to our highest respect;—but which indeed should be the very last to send forth one single cavil. The ladies generally, we believe, are our friends; but some of these insist that Free Masonry must be a very naughty affair, because forsooth, they are not permitted to share in the labors or mysteries of the Lodge-room. Now, permit us to assure the ladies that none appreciate the high intellectual, moral, and social worth of their sex more than the members of our Fraternity; and that they are excluded from our meetings for that very reason. We esteem woman most highly in her own appropriate sphere.

Woman, born to dignify retreat,
Unknown to flourish, and unseen be great,
To give domestic life its sweetest charm,
With softness polish, and with virtue warm;
Fearful of tame, unwilling to be known:

would be quite as much out of place, in the midst of our masculine employments in the Lodge-room, as if she were to assume the politician's stand upon the hustings, don the Judge's ermine, usurp the Minister's sacred office, or clad in the panoply of war, lead a band of Amazons to carnage and to conquest. Meanwhile, however, woman is not excluded from the sympathies, and from the guardianship of our Craft. The mothers, wives, daughters, sisters of Masons are objects of deep and abiding interest to every brother Mason; and he who shall fail to feel that interest, and to be governed by it in all his conduct, is no true Mason, but a foul reproach to the entire fraternity. Unseen by them he watches over their safety, averts many a danger, affords timely aid, if need be; and unites with their natural protectors in asserting their rights and maintaining their cause. Should the latter die, he steps forward to protect, support, befriend them. I ask, then, if we do not merit the high esteem of the gentler sex, rather than their censure, because we break not down all the barriers of our institution for their admission, when to do this would be to deprive ourselves, to no small extent, of the power to do them service. Be assured, ladies, that it is best as it is; and when you would reproach us for what some are pleased to term our exclusivism, remember that we are your devoted friends, the constant admirers of your virtue, and the untiring, though unseen, defenders of your innocence and happiness. Need we say more to win your approbation—to secure your esteem?

Thus have we sought to improve what we have deemed an appropriate occasion for the explication of the principles and purposes of Free Masonry; and for its vindication from some of the objections which are popularly urged against it. If in accomplishing this task, we have spoken in terms of high commendation of the Order, it is because of an earnest conviction of the excellency inherent in it. Nevertheless, we would most carefully avoid any undue elevation of this Institution that would place it in a position of rivalry with our Holy Christianity. Free Masonry sets up no such claim, makes no such pretension. She would serve as a modest and unpresuming hand-maid to Religion; and as nature would lead the observer of her beauty and grandeur, and sublimity up to Nature's God; so would Free Masonry lead her votaries from the contemplation of the symbol to the love of the symbolized:—from the cabala of her vestibule to the mysteries of the grand temple of Divine erection:—from the lessons taught by her, to the school of the Prophets and Apostles, where Jesus of Nazareth is at once the theme and the Great Teacher. Neither claiming Divine Commission; nor thrusting herself into the sacred office; she would, nevertheless, like John the Baptist, reverently point to the Incarnate Deity, and cry in the ears of her disciples—“Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world?” She would have her sons possess themselves of the only true pass-word—JESUS!

— the name high over all;
In hell, or earth, or sky!
Angels and men before it fall,
And devils fear and fly:

that blessed name which is man's solace amid the sorrows of life; the antidote to death itself; and the Shibboleth which shall finally distinguish the Ephraimites from the Gileadites, and secure admittance to full participation in the glorious rites of the Grand Convocation above,

Where, wrought with hands, no temples rise,
For God himself their place supplies;
Nor priests are needed, in the abode,
Where the whole hosts are priests to God.

In conclusion, my Brothers, permit me to say to you, in all fidelity and affection, that Masons themselves are, after all, and of necessity, the exponents to the uninitiated of the merits of the Order. In vain this public demonstration to-night; in vain this effort to explain and commend the principles and purposes of Free Masonry; if our lives do not afford a satisfactory commentary on the declarations that have been uttered here on this occasion. The canvass may glow with the portraiture

of her loveliness, displayed in truthful limning ; but we live in an age eminently skeptical as well as practical. Men now think for themselves, and they should do so. Our fellow citizens will compare the portraiture with the living reality ; and if the comparison be not satisfactory, they will reach the conclusion, however erroneously, that our avowed principles and purposes, though never so excellent in the abstract, are inefficient in their practical bearing ; and discard Free Masonry as a beautiful but unsubstantial phantasm.

Oh ! my Brothers, permit not this occasion to pass away unimproved by you :—suffer it not to pass away as an idle pageant, to be forgotten on the morrow, or remembered only as a gala day. Oh ! no. Look around you upon this crowded assembly. Witness the indications of approval of our Order, as evinced by the hushed interest of this large audience in the subject under discussion. Gather from the circumstances of this occasion fresh impulses; form high resolves; take new courage; and go forth to do more as men, as Masons, it may be as Christians, for the intellectual, the moral, and the religious elevation of yourselves, your neighbors, and your race. Go forth to bless the community in which you live by a noble example; and to send out streams of benefaction to remoter distances. Go forth from this temple to-night, resolved to dwell with the redeemed of God on high, when your labors on earth are completed. If put in possession *here* of the white stone, wherein a new name is written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it, you shall mingle *there* in the choral symphonies of the myriad “ harpers harping on their harps.”

Like as a star
That maketh not haste,
That taketh not rest,
Be each one fulfilling
His God-given hest

“ in the manner of a true man ” and a true Mason. “ Not for a day, but for Eternity ; not commodiously in the reputable, the plausible, the half, but resolutely in the whole, the Good, the True.” *So mote it be!*

